TL6659-098

SINAR HARAPAN 27 December, 1983

Christmas in East Timor:

## Commander-in-Chief Again Appeals, Those Who Report will be Well Treated

The Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces (ABRI), General Benny Murdani has warned those who are deluded enough to believe that they can set up a state outside the unitary state of the Republic of Indonesia to put a stop to their efforts which are doomed to failure because the Armed Forces will never stop performing the duty with which they have been entrusted.

Speaking on Christmas night to troops, religious leaders, leaders of the commuity and local officials in Dili, the C-in-C called upon everyone in the hills, the forests, the caves and the towns to halt their efforts and surrender to the authorities. "As commander of ABRI, I give a guarantee that all those who declare that they have stopped carrying out such condemnable actions will be well treated, will be treated humanely treated," said Benny with great emphasis.

The Commander-in-Chief who spent Christmas Day visiting remote parts of East Timor, said that there are people who spread it around that the lives of people who surrender cannot be safe. "I repeat once again," Benny went on, "that if they report to the closest civil or military authorities, they will be well treated."

The Commander used the occasion to make the point that the birth of Christ as a human being in a poor, simple cattle manger presented a picture of nobility and glory in the midst of suffering and hardship, a picture that was relevant for every single soldier. He felt convinced that this would strengthen the resolve of every member of ABRI. "Each noble and glorious task entrusted to ABRI members is never free of suffering and sacrifice." A soldier, said the Commander, possesses a deep sense of nobility and glory founded upon his devotion to the Motherland, to the Pancasila philosophy and to the Sapta Marga (the ABRI doctrine), so that if necessary he is willing to sacrifice his life. This attitude motivates a soldier's sense of duty as a Sapta Marga soldier, it consoles him and reinforces his mental outlook.

On the occasion of this simple Christma celebration,General Benny Murdani expressed his pride in the knowledge that such consciousness inspires every member of ABRI from the moment he sets foot on East Timor soil to carry out his duties there. "I am quire certain," he went on, "that the great hardship of not being with your families, because you have been entrusted with this great and glorious task for the nation and state, can console you and strengthen your convictions."

He called upon those present to offer up a prayer that our misguided brothers would not need a long time to take their decision to return to the correct path, and to build up East Timor, a country that has been neglected for so many centuries and has suffered so much brutality.

On this Christmas visit, the Commander-in-chief was accompanied by the Chief of Staff for Operations of the Department of Defence and Security/ABRI, Lieutenant-General Himawan Sutanto, Inspector-General of the Department of Defence and Security, Lt-General Gunawan Wibisono, Deputy Chief-of-Staff Lt-General Bambang Triantoro, and other senior officers from the Department and other forces. The Commander-in-Chief also visted several isolated ABRI posts in the subdistricts of Oessu (district of Viqueque, Tr), Natarbora (district of Manatuto, Tr) and Alas (district of Manufuhi/Same, Tr)

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NB According to an AAP/AFP report from Jakarta (Canberra Times, 15 November 1983), Indonesian aircraft have been in action attacking targets in places as wide apart as Bobonaro, Ainaro, Venilale, Uatulari and Los Palos. The current offensive thus appears to encompass the entire country from west to east. Murdani's speech suggests that four months after the offensive was launched, no progress has been made and that resistance, not only in the bush but also in the Indonesian-occupied towns, is continuing unabated.

The AAP/AFP report adds that twenty helis are providing logistical support with army Hercules C130 transport aircraft regularly shuttling between Jakarta and Dili. The army, it reports, wants to wind up its operations in the area "by the end of January".

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The statement made In Dili on Christmas Day by Armed Forces Commander in Chief, General Benny Murdani is of very great interest to us. He said on the one hand that the Armed Forces would continue to implement their tasks in that region until they have been successfully completed, and on the other hand, he called upon those still on the wrong path to halt their efforts which would never succeed, and said that if they surrender, they will be well treated. General Murdani also said that those who still dream of setting up a state within the territory of the Rpublic of Indonesia which is separate from the Republic should stop pursuing such deeams because such efforts would certainly be in vain.

For ordinary people, particularly those living in places far away from East Timor, they must be wondering what in fact is happening in that region. For a very long time, there has been no news about the security situation there since the so-called 'President of Fretilin' was shot dead. All the news about East Timor is only about the rapid economic development there. When the Australian parliamentary mission visited East Timor, all the reports said that the region was now very quiet and peaceful. Only those people who were persistent enough to listen to foreign news broadcast have occasionally heard news that armed conflicts still occur between the Armed Forces and the trouble-makers there who call themselves Fretilin. People who hear reports like this are inclined to question the accuracy of such reports because the Indonesian Government never publishes any news about the actual position of security in that region.

Although General Murdani did not in his speech provide a detailed account about the security situation in East Timor, we can get the impression that the armed gangs have not yet been crushed. The Commander-in-Chief even said that they are still aiming to set up another state within the State of the Republic of Indonesia, even though he described this as a dream that would never be realised. The impression to be gained from General Murdani's statement is that those armed groups have political motives. If this is indeed the case, then it would be wrong to regard the question of security in East Timor as something trivial.

Efforts by our Armed Forces to safeguard East Timor from the remnants of the Fretilin gangs have been continuing for a number of years; appeals have been made to them for years to surrender yet it now appears that all these efforts have not yet been successful.

We need to devote a great deal of attention to the security situation in East Timor and to study from the experiences of our own history. Armed groups can hold out for a very long time if they have support. This support can come from outside and it can also come from inside. Usually the most decisive factor is the support from inside, that is to say, from the people. Experience shows that if this kind of support is to be handled, it cannot be done only by mititary means. A packet of measures is needed, with good coordination between social political, social-economic, military as well as diplomatic actions.

The question of security in East Timor is not a local affair, something that can be localised. Security in that region is also part of national security which is a matter to be borne the whole nation., a national responsibility. Therefore the Indonesian people should be informed of the real situation in East Timor so as to be able to develop a proper sense of national vigilance.

Well coordinated efforts have indeed already been made by the government. These included diplomatic measures giving the opportunity to members of the Australian parliament to investigate East Timor so as to obtain a clearer understanding and thus reduce the support factor from outside. But it still needs to be considered whether collaboration between the Armed Forces, the people and the government has really taken root in East Timor.